WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for determining the severity of an arthritis condition in a mammal, said method comprising determining whether or not a sample from said mammal contains at least one marker, said marker being an elevated level of a CD21L polypeptide, an elevated level of a lymphotoxin-β polypeptide, or an elevated level of a chemoattractant polypeptide, wherein the presence of said at least one marker indicates that said arthritis condition is severe.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said arthritis condition is rheumatoid arthritis.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said mammal is a human.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said sample is a tissue sample.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said sample is a synovial tissue sample.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one marker is said elevated level of a CD21L polypeptide.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one marker is said elevated level of a lymphotoxin-β polypeptide.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one marker is said elevated level of a chemoattractant polypeptide.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said chemoattractant is a B-lymphocyte chemoattractant polypeptide.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said method comprises determining whether or not said sample contains at least two of said markers.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said method comprises determining whether or not said sample contains at least three of said markers.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein said method comprises determining whether or not said sample contains at least four of said markers.

13. A method of assisting a person in determining the severity of an arthritis condition in a mammal, wherein said method comprises:

a) determining whether or not a sample from said mammal contains at least one marker, said marker being an elevated level of a CD21L polypeptide, an elevated level of a lymphotoxin-β polypeptide, or an elevated level of a chemoattractant polypeptide, and

b) communicating information about the presence or absence of said at least one marker in said sample to said person, wherein the presence of said at least one marker indicates that said arthritis condition is severe.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein said person is a medical or research professional.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein said person is selected from the group consisting of a doctor, a nurse practitioner, a research scientist, and a research technician.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein said arthritis condition is rheumatoid arthritis.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein said mammal is a human.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein said mammal is a rodent.

19. The method of claim 13, wherein said sample is a tissue sample.

20. The method of claim 13, wherein said sample is a synovial tissue sample.

21. The method of claim 13, wherein said at least one marker is said elevated level of a CD21L polypeptide.

22. The method of claim 13, wherein said at least one marker is said elevated level of a lymphotoxin-β polypeptide.

23. The method of claim 13, wherein said at least one marker is said elevated level of a chemoattractant polypeptide.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said chemoattractant polypeptide is a B-lymphocyte chemoattractant polypeptide.

25. The method of claim 13, wherein said communication comprises sending said information directly to said person.

26. The method of claim 13, wherein said communication comprises sending said information indirectly to said person.

27. The method of claim 13, wherein said communication comprises making said information electronically available to said person.

28. The method of claim 13, wherein said method comprises determining whether or not said sample contains at least two of said markers.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said method comprises communicating information about the presence or absence of said at least two markers in said sample to said person.

30. The method of claim 13, wherein said method comprises determining whether or not said sample contains at least three of said markers.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein said method comprises communicating information about the presence or absence of said at least three markers in said sample to said person.

32. The method of claim 13, wherein said method comprises determining whether or not said sample contains at least four of said markers.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said method comprises communicating information about the presence or absence of said at least four markers in said sample to said person.

34. A kit comprising at least two oligonucleotide primer pairs, wherein each of said primer pairs amplifies a different target nucleic acid sequence, wherein said target nucleic acid sequence is selected from the group consisting of a CD21L nucleic acid, a lymphotoxin-β nucleic acid, and a B-lymphocyte chemoattractant nucleic acid.

35. An article of manufacture comprising at least two oligonucleotide primer pairs and a label or package insert indicating that each of said at least two oligonucleotide primer pairs can amplify a different target sequence in an amplification reaction, wherein each said target sequence is selected from the group consisting of a CD21L nucleic acid, a lymphotoxin-β nucleic acid, and a B-lymphocyte chemoattractant nucleic acid.